BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry for Children and Families

A STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES 1999/2000

This publication is compiled by:

Data Services Branch

May 2001

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HIGHLIGHTS

The protection of children activity continued to increase during the fiscal year.

- *The number of protection reports from the public increased by 5.0% over the last year while the number of protection investigations increased by 0.8%. (see pages 5 & 7 for details)*

- *Only 11.8% of children required admission to care through a court order for protection. (see page 8)*

In spite of the increase in reporting and investigation activity, the number of children in the care of the director decreased slightly. Less intrusive protective family services were provided for children in their own homes.

- *The number of children in care decreased by 3.0% over the last year as compared to a growth of 4.8% in the previous year. (see page 15)*

- *New admissions to care declined by 16.9% over the last year while the number of discharges from care decreased by 5.2%. (see pages 14 & 17)*

Work with families continued at a high level and resulted in the rapid return home of many children in care.

- *Nearly 80% of the children discharged during the year were returned to their parents either because of improvements in the family or because the care needed by the child was completed. (see page 17)*

- *51% of the children were discharged within six months of admission and just over 70% were discharged within a year. (see page 18)*

Adoption increased as a way of providing children with permanent family planning.

- *During the fiscal year, 193 children were placed in an adoption home. (see page 20)*

VOLUNTARY FAMILY SERVICES

VOLUNTARY REQUESTS FOR SERVICES

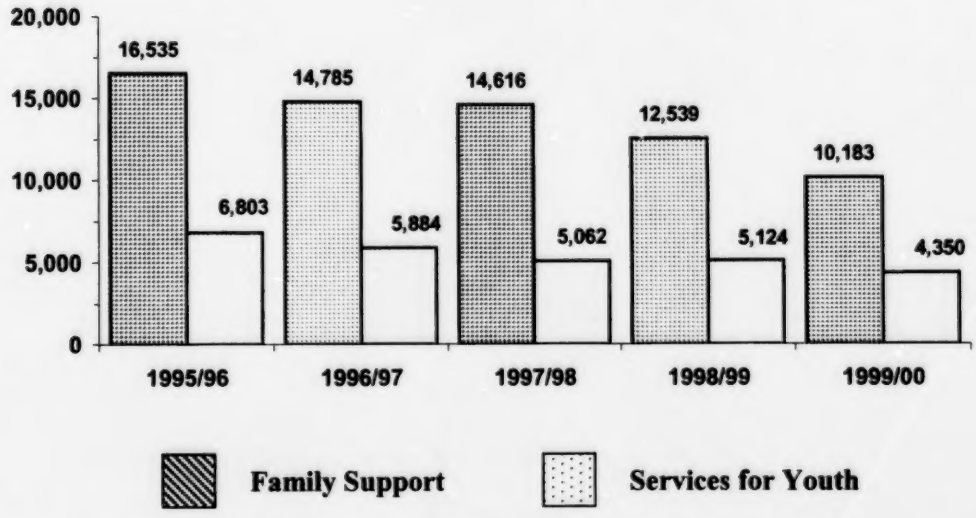
The Ministry is committed to supporting families to maintain their strength and independence. Families who are having difficulties are encouraged to seek help before their problems develop into protection concerns. Many of these requests involve services oriented to youth. Support services include parent-teen counselling, in-home support, respite care, parenting programs, drug and alcohol counselling, mental health services and services for children who witness violence.

- During 1999/2000 the Ministry received 14,533 requests – a decrease of 17.7% over the previous year.

- Requests for family support services made up 70.0% of the total while services for youth accounted for the remaining 30.0%. This proportion has shifted over the last two years with family support requests accounting for 74.3% of the voluntary requests for services in 1997/98.

- At the end of March 2000, 3439 families were receiving non-protective services or were being assessed for eligibility.

VOLUNTARY REQUESTS FOR SERVICES



VOLUNTARY FAMILY SERVICES

REGIONAL STATISTICS*

REGION	FAMILY SERV ICE (During Year)	YOUTH SERVICE (During Year)
Kootenays	555	265
Okanagan	1,026	563
Thompson/Cariboo	659	220
Upper Fraser Valley	691	301
South Fraser	1,244	948
Simon Fraser	910	528
Coast/North Shore	588	115
Central & Upper Island	1,182	438
North	1,015	373
Vancouver/Richmond	1,528	371
Capital	785	228
Total Province	10,183	4,350

* A map of the Regions is contained in Appendix A.

MCF ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

OVERVIEW

The Ministry for Children and Families recognizes the inherent responsibility of Aboriginal communities for the safety and well being of children, and for the design and delivery of services to families and children. Through the process of delegation of authority to Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies from the Director of Child Protection under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the legal responsibility for the protection of all children is affirmed.

Aboriginal child, family and community services are provided under provincially delegated authority and are supported by federal funding. The ministry is also working with urban-based Aboriginal groups and Metis communities to develop and deliver their own child and family services.

A total of 14 aboriginal agencies have signed agreements with the Director and were in effect as of the end of March 2000.

OPERATIONAL

- Six Aboriginal Agencies, representing 53 bands, provide a full range of child protection services.
- Three Aboriginal Agencies, representing 11 bands, provide Guardianship Services.
- Four Aboriginal Agencies, representing 14 bands and the Nisga'a, provide Resource Development and Voluntary Services.
- One Aboriginal Agency, operates under a band by-law.

START-UP STAGE

- Five Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies, serving 26 First Nations communities have signed agreements with the Director and are in the beginning stages of program development.

PLANNING STAGE

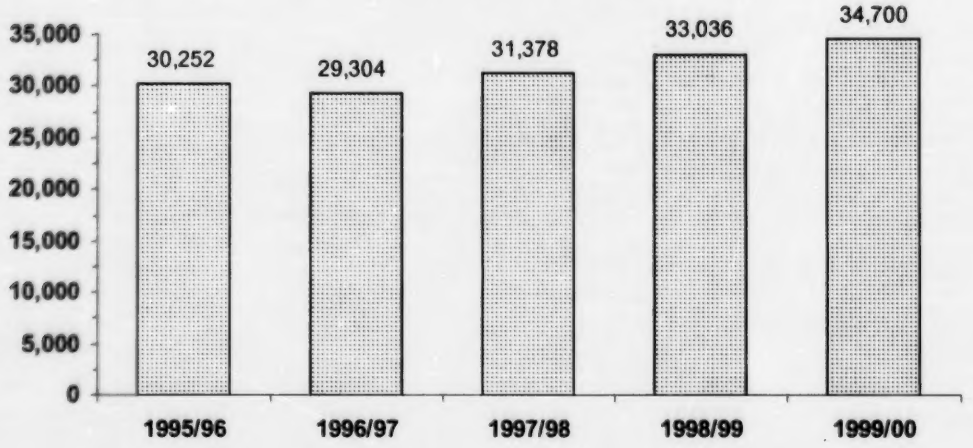
- Three Aboriginal Agencies, representing 14 bands, three Metis Agencies and two urban-based Aboriginal Agencies are in the pre-planning or planning stage of organizational development.

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTECTION REPORTS

Persons who have reason to believe that a child may be in need of protection are required by law to report this information to the Ministry. This information is assessed to determine if an investigation is required.

PROTECTION REPORTS



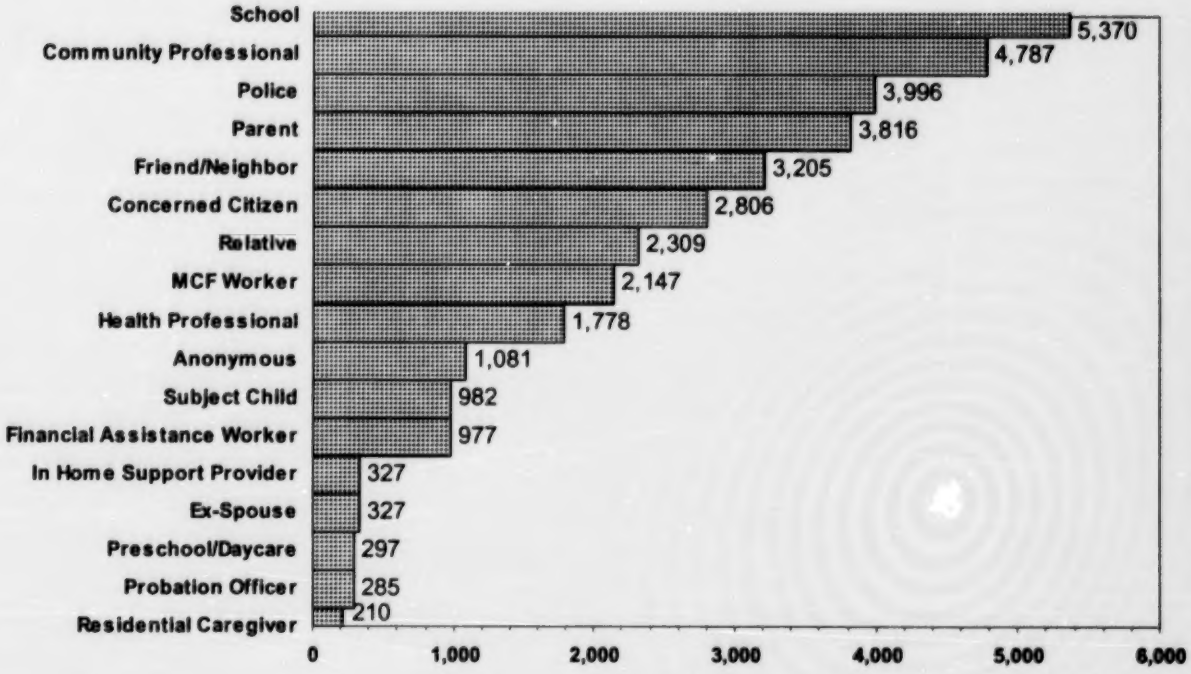
During the year the Ministry received 34,700 reports about children in need of protection – an increase of 5.0% over last year.

- The majority of calls (58.1%) came from professionals and service providers who were in contact with the family or subject child.
- The subject child, immediate family and other relatives were the source of 21.4% of the calls.
- Concerned citizens, neighbors and friends made 17.3% of calls while 3.1% were received from anonymous sources.

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTECTION REPORTS

TYPE OF CALLER



OUTCOMES

- An investigation was undertaken in a majority (29,494 calls- 85.0%) of the complaints.

- A preliminary assessment revealed that no further action was required either because the situation had previously been assessed (932 calls – 2.7%) or because there was insufficient information on which to proceed (666 calls – 1.9%).

- In 2969 cases (8.5%) the circumstances did not constitute a reason for protection according to the CF&CS Act.

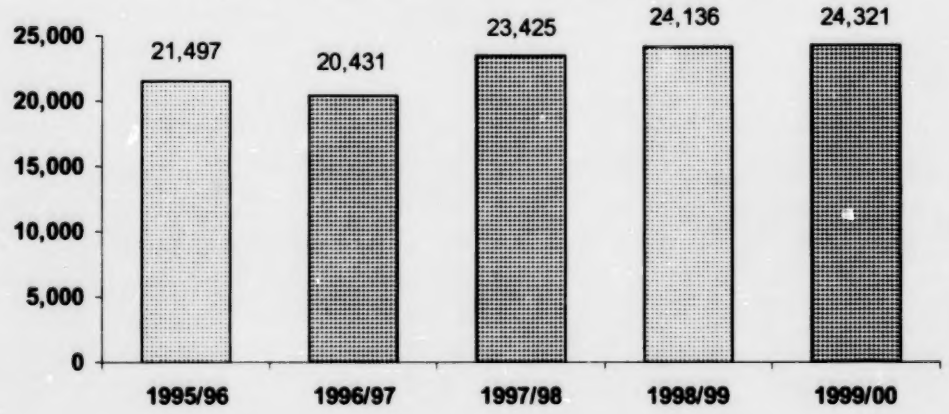
- In 639 cases (1.8%), a preliminary assessment revealed that the parents were able to protect the child.

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTECTION INVESTIGATION

When the preliminary assessment of a protection report indicates that a child may be at risk, a full investigation is undertaken to determine if child protection and/or protective family services are required.

PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS



- During the 1999/2000 fiscal year, 24,321 protection investigations involving more than 38,000 children were completed – an increase of 0.8% over the previous year.

- Parents unable or unwilling to care for the child was the most frequently cited allegation – followed by physical abuse and neglect . (see table on next page)

- In 7630 cases (31.4%) it was found that some form of abuse or neglect had occurred.

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS

PROTECTION FINDINGS	NUMBER OF CASES	PERCENT OF CASES
Physical Abuse	2,353	9.7%
Sexual Abuse	353	1.5%
Parents Not Protecting Child From Abuse	628	2.6%
Neglect	2,247	9.2%
Emotional Abuse	1,507	6.2%
Parents Unable or Unwilling to Care for Child	2,841	11.7%
Child Absent from Home and in Danger	502	2.1%
Child Abandoned	431	1.8%
Other Protection Findings	198	0.8%

RESPONSE TO THE FINDINGS

- In the largest proportion of cases (35.9% - 8,729 cases) it was determined that no service was required.

- In 6,998 cases (28.8%) ongoing protective family services were required.

- A further 5,256 cases (21.6%) were referred to another Ministry or a Community agency for service.

- In 2,869 cases (11.8%) it was assessed that the children should be removed from the family as no less intrusive measure was appropriate to ensure their protection. In a further 469 cases (1.9%) a voluntary care or special needs agreement was offered.

CHILD PROTECTION

REGIONAL STATISTICS*

REGION	PROTECTION COMPLAINTS (DURING YEAR)	PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS (DURING YEAR)
Kootenays	2,093	1,302
Okanagan	3,105	2,276
Thompson/Cariboo	2,794	2,045
Upper Fraser Valley	2,123	1,497
South Fraser	3,982	2,681
Simon Fraser	3,272	2,564
Coast/North Shore	1,556	815
Central & Upper Island	3,971	2,439
North	4,627	3,645
Vancouver/Richmond	4,006	2,948
Capital	3,143	2,084
Headquarters	1	------
Lower Mainland Facilities	27	25
Total Province	34,700	24,321

*A map of the MCF Regions is contained in Appendix A.

CHILD PROTECTION

PROTECTIVE FAMILY SERVICE

Protective family services are provided in those situations where an investigation reveals that a child requires ongoing protection. Services may involve protecting the child by providing "at home" services and supervision. In some situations court ordered supervision of the child's care may be necessary. As a last resort, removal of the child may be required. In these circumstances the child is protected through foster care while protective family services are provided to the family to assist them in caring safely for their child. When the risk factors have been reduced sufficiently the child may be returned home with ongoing protective family services.

- During the 1999/2000 fiscal year, child protection investigations indicated that 6,998 additional families needed protective family services.

- On March 31, 2000, a total of 11,290 families, involving nearly 18,000 children, were receiving protective family services – an increase of 4.2% over the previous year.

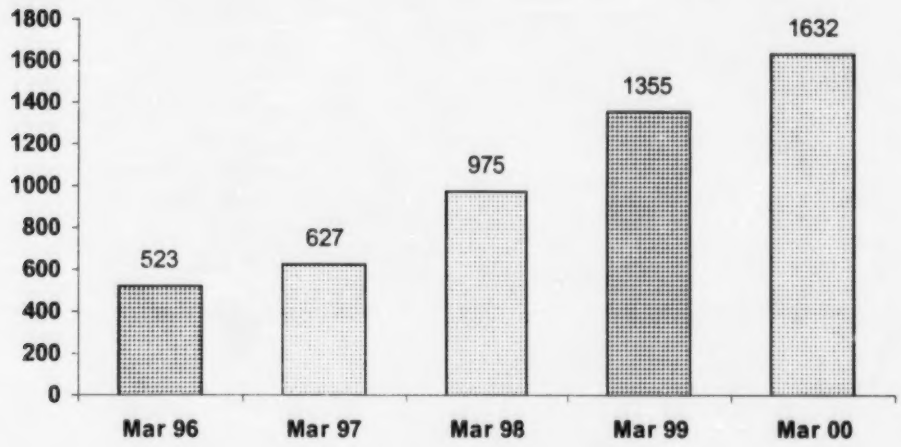
- Work with families resulted in 4,567 children in care being returned home during the fiscal year.

CHILD PROTECTION

COURT ORDERED SUPERVISION

Court ordered supervision provides an extra level of child protection security when children are returned to the care of their parents. In these cases, Social workers provide support to the family as well as monitoring the care that the child receives. Supervision orders can now be granted without the child having been removed from the parent's care.

CHILDREN UNDER SUPERVISION



- On March 31, 2000 there were 1632 children under Ministry supervision – an increase of 20.4% over the previous year.

- Most of the children (72.6% - 1185 cases) were returned home under supervision after a period of time in care.

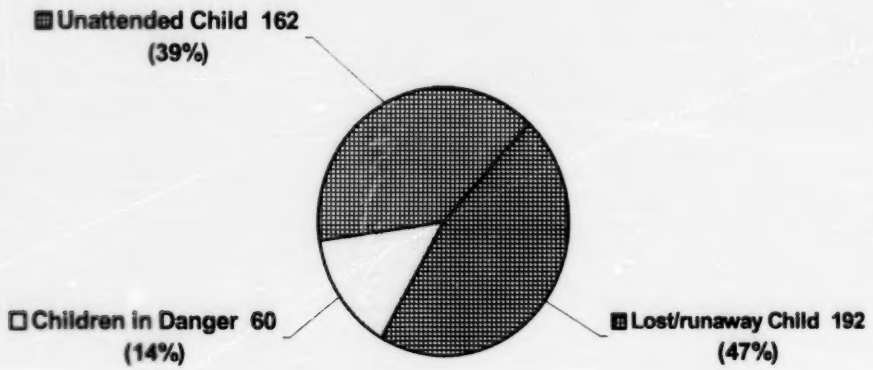
- However, 138 children (8.5%) were supervised pending a court hearing on their need for protection while 309 children (18.9%) were supervised at home without removal.

CHILD PROTECTION

TAKEN IN CHARGE

The Ministry is committed to maintaining children in their own family wherever possible. When the child is separated from the family, the Ministry can take the child **in charge** for a temporary period of up to 72 hours while attempts are made to contact the parents. The least disruptive care possible is provided while the child is **in charge** – preferably with relatives, friends or within the family home.

CHILDREN TAKEN IN CHARGE BY TYPE
1999/2000



- In 1999/2000 a total of 414 children were taken **in charge**.

- Lost or runaway children made up nearly half (46.4%) of the total. Unattended children accounted for another 39.1% while children in immediate danger accounted for the remaining 14.5%.

OUTCOMES

Most children (88.4% - 366 children) were returned to their families. The remaining 48 children were subsequently taken into care.

CHILD PROTECTION

REGIONAL STATISTICS*

REGION	UNDER SUPERVISION (AT MAR 31, 2000)	TAKEN IN CHARGE (DURING YEAR)
Kootenays	126	15
Okanagan	130	37
Thompson/Cariboo	174	41
Upper Fraser Valley	78	54
South Fraser	124	20
Simon Fraser	121	11
Coast/North Shore	48	7
Central & Upper Island	191	31
North	401	52
Vancouver/Richmond	167	135
Capital	72	11
Headquarters	------	------
Lower Mainland Facilities	------	------
Total Province	1,632	414

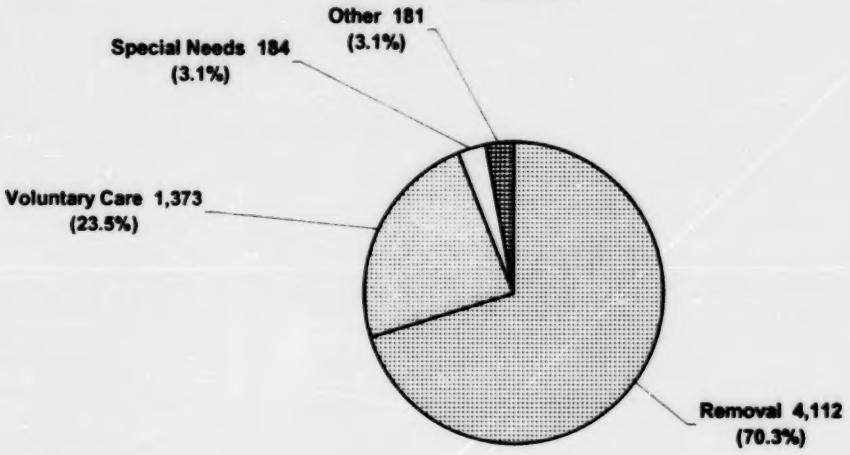
*A map of the MCF Regions is contained in Appendix A.

CHILDREN IN CARE

ADMISSIONS TO CARE

When it is not possible to provide for the safety and needs of a child within the family home, the child may be admitted to the care of the Director. This is done when all less disruptive alternatives have been considered and, where possible, with the co-operation and agreement of the parents.

ADMISSIONS TO CARE BY TYPE
1999/2000



- Admissions to care totaled 5,850 during the fiscal year – a decline of 16.9% over last year.

- Almost three quarters (70.3% - 4112 children) were removed under the provisions of the Child, Family & Community Services Act.

- Admissions by parental agreement came to 1557 or 26.6% of total admissions – 1,373 were voluntary care agreements and 184 were special needs agreements.

- Admission from other jurisdictions and admissions under other legislation accounted for the remaining 181 children (3.1%), a large percentage being the Chinese migrant children admitted under the Family Relations Act.

- Children who have previously been in care made up 37.3% of the total.

CHILDREN IN CARE

OVERVIEW

The primary objective of the child in care program is to provide substitute parenting for children who are unable to live with their own families. Emphasis is placed on planning for these children to assure that both their short and long term needs are met.

- The number of children in care decreased during the fiscal year following a small growth the previous year.

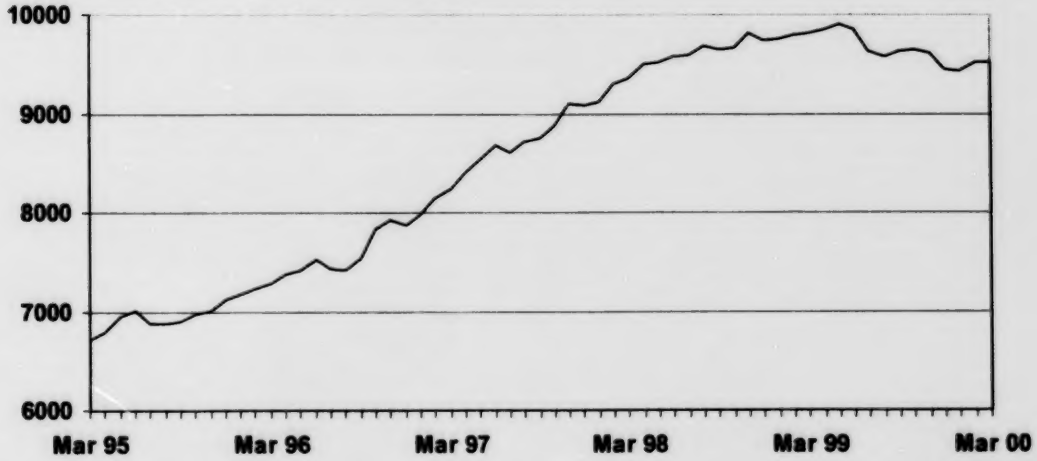
- On March 31, 2000 there were 9,523 children in care – decreased of 290 children over the last year. This is a decrease of 3.0% as compared to 4.8% growth in the previous year.

- Teen children continue to form the largest group – accounting for 45.1% of the total.

- Children in care under a continuing custody order are the largest group (49.4% - 4515 cases) of legal authorities.

- A total of 3,078 children (32.3%) were of aboriginal background.

CHILDREN IN CARE
March 1995 – March 2000



CHILDREN IN CARE

OUT OF HOME LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry's goal is to provide the kind of alternative care that best meets the needs of the child. This is done through a variety of Ministry funded family and specialized resources as well as other types of care that are available in the community.

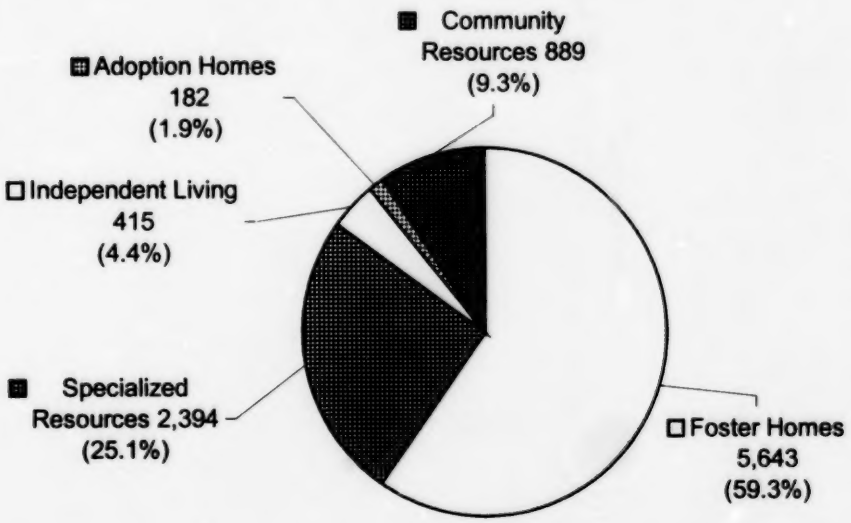
- On March 31, 2000 a total of 5,643 children (59.3%) were cared for in Family Care Homes while a further 2,394 children (25.1%) were placed in specialized resources such as group homes or staffed residential programs.

- Older children are often prepared for independence by placement in supervised independent living situations. There were 415 children in this type of placement at the end of March.

- A further 182 children were in adoption homes that will provide long term security.

- The remaining children were cared for in a variety of community resources such as hospitals, or by parents, relatives, neighbors or were absent without permission.

CHILDREN BY TYPE OF RESOURCE
March 31, 2000


Community Resources 889 (9.3%)
Adoption Homes 182 (1.9%)
Independent Living 415 (4.4%)
Specialized Resources 2,394 (25.1%)
Foster Homes 5,643 (59.3%)

CHILDREN IN CARE

DISCHARGES*

The Ministry's goal is to work with parents towards the speedy return of their children. Where this is not possible, attempts are made to place the child within the extended family or in an alternate permanent home. When these options are not available, the Ministry's concentrates on providing good substitute parenting in order to prepare the child for eventual independence.

- During the 1999/2000 fiscal year a total of 6,204 children were discharged from care – a decrease of 5.2% over the same period a year ago.

- Most of the discharged children were able to return to the family home – 1,898 children (30.6%) were returned without condition while 2,669 children (43.0%) were returned under supervision.

- 310 children receiving specialized care (5.0%) were discharged when the services they required were complete.

- The files of 297 children (4.8%) were closed as the child was no longer accepting services or had died.

- A further 726 children (11.7%) were discharged because they reached the age of majority or were married and became independent.

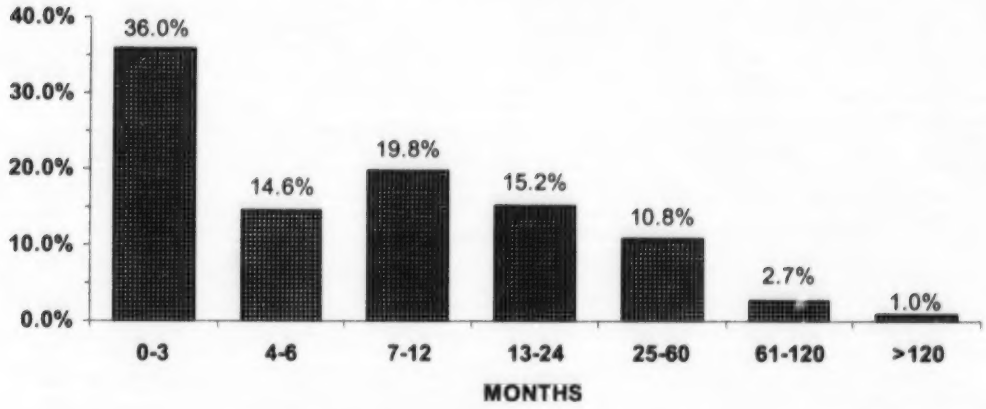
- Permanent placements with relatives or in adoption homes were completed in 304 cases (4.9%).

* The number of discharges are believed to be undercounted due to a computer system flaw.

CHILDREN IN CARE

DISCHARGES

LENGTH OF TIME IN CARE
Discharged Children



- Most children require care for a relatively short period of time – 36.0% of the children discharged during the year were returned within 3 months, 50.6% were returned within 6 months and 70.4% were returned within one year.

- Some children require longer term care – often because of special needs that continue into adulthood – 2.7% of the discharged children had been in care between 5 and 10 years while 1.0% had been in care for over 10 years.

SERVICES TO FORMER PERMANENT YOUTH IN CARE
(AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE IN CARE PROGRAM)

This program provides services to young adults, 19-24 years of age, who were in the continuing custody or guardianship of the Director up until their 19th birthday.

- As of the end of March 2000, there were 273 youth receiving services such as support and shelter costs, tuition, job readiness courses, basic medical coverage.

CHILDREN IN CARE

REGIONAL STATISTICS*

REGION	ADMITTED TO CARE (During Year)	CHILDREN IN CARE (At Mar 31, 2000)	DISCHARGED FROM CARE (During Year)
Kootenays	270	364	347
Okanagan	634	1,000	787
Thompson/Cariboo	481	752	478
Upper Fraser Valley	362	587	377
South Fraser	514	1,042	541
Simon Fraser	490	854	472
Coast/North Shore	222	315	228
Central & Upper Island	691	1,070	767
North	859	1,187	991
Vancouver/Richmond	808	1,473	806
Capital	440	807	395
Headquarters	1	3	1
Lower Mainland Facilities	78	69	14
Total Province	5,850	9,523	6,204

*A map of the MCF Regions is contained in Appendix A.

ADOPTION

ADOPTION PLACEMENTS

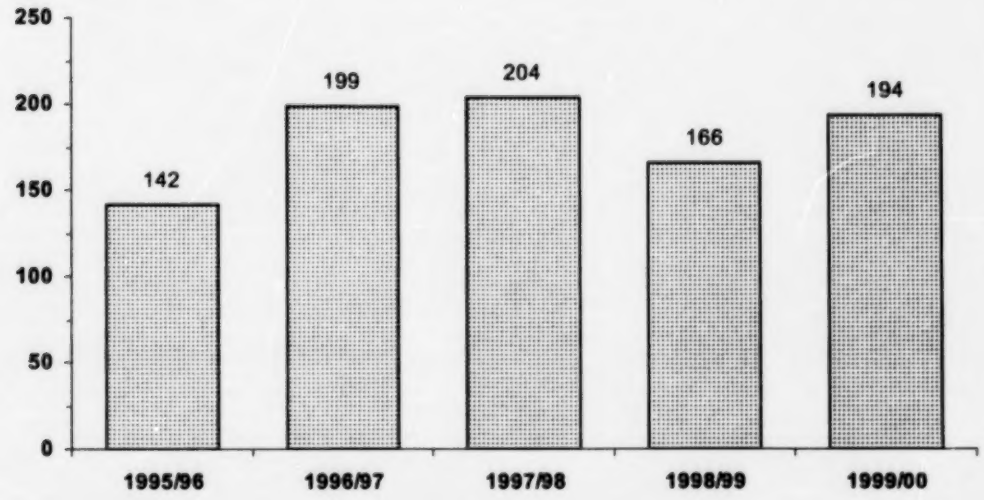
Adoption services provide for children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents and who need and can benefit from permanent family ties established through a legal process.

- The Ministry placed 193 children for adoption in 1999/2000 – an increase of 18.9% over the previous year. Of these, 46 were healthy infants and 147 were older or special needs children.

- At the end of March 2000, a total of 726 homes were registered with the Ministry as desiring an adoption placement. These prospective parents could either have an application on file pending a home study (348), or be in the process of having a home study completed (209) or be approved for placement (169).

- At the end of March 2000, a total of 600 children were registered on the Adoption Placement System. These children could be: not ready for an immediate placement (22), have a home being considered for them (105), are in the process of a placement proposal (95) or have no homes available for them (378).

ADOPTION PLACEMENTS



ADOPTION

REGIONAL STATISTICS*

REGION	CHILDREN PLACED (DURING YEAR)	ADOPTION APPLICANTS (YEAR END)
Kootenays	5	40
Okanagan	26	85
Thompson/Cariboo	17	39
Upper Fraser Valley	24	53
South Fraser	19	101
Simon Fraser	25	86
Coast/North Shore	5	46
Central & Upper Island	29	83
North	24	73
Vancouver/Richmond	5	56
Capital	14	64
Headquarters	------	------
Lower Mainland Facilities	------	------
Out of Province	------	------
Total Province	193	726

*A map of the MCF Regions is contained in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry for Children and Families